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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 000529

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TAGS: PREL MOPS PBTS GG RS

SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICA VIEWS RUSSIAN RECOGNITION OF ABHAZIA AND SOUTH OSSETIA

REF: A. STATE 24186
1B. PRETORIA 275

Classified By: Classified by Political Counselor Raymond L. Brown for Reasons 1.4 b and d

¶11. (C) Deputy Political Counselor delivered reftel message at a March 19 meeting with Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Deputy Director for Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine Maria de Freitas and DFA Deputy Director for Security Counsel issues Ilia Du Buisson. Du Buisson stressed South Africa's support for the territorial integrity of Georgia and for recent UNSC resolution on Abhazia and South Ossetia. She welcomed reference to the August 12 and September 8 agreements in the most recent UNSCR. De Freitas and Du Buisson further stressed that South Africa supports the Six-Point Plan as the basis for determining the status of the two regions.

¶12. (C) De Freitas told us that the Russian Embassy in Pretoria had not made any recent representations to the South African Government regarding South Ossetia and Abhazia. Du Buisson outlined the lengthy process through which South Africa might consider diplomatic recognition, which begins with a legal opinion, and assured us that no such process is underway or under consideration with regard to the two Georgian breakaway regions.

¶13. (C) Anticipating that Du Buisson would remind us that South Africa sees its position on Abhazia and South Ossetia as related to its position on Kosovo (Please see ref B), as she decided to do, we also deployed Department's if-asked guidance. As noted in previous demarche reports, South African officials are inclined to share our concern with regard to developments in Georgia, but they continue to see the situation in Georgia as "Russian pay-back for Kosovo," and they remain unconvinced that the process through which Kosovo gained its independence met international standards.

¶14. (C) Comment: South Africa has no plans to recognize either the Georgian regions or Kosovo. South African officials see Russian annoyance with the SAG position on Georgia, as well as our disappointment on the SAG's Kosovo position, as evidence that their adherence to non-alignment as a policy still has relevance.

LA LIME